The Theosophical FORUM

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THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM

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* * *

In their first youth, people expect everything to come to them from without; all our surroundings are appealed to for happiness, at that time; yet day after day, every incident and every object will gradually send us within ourselves.

Life is like unto the sea: their most sublime effects always depend upon storms.

THE UPANISHADS AND THE BRAHMANS.

"Thinking sacrifices and offerings are best,
these fools know not the better way."
—*Mundaka Upanishad.*

It has always been accepted as one of the established truths of Oriental studies, that the Upanishads contain the wisdom of the Brahmans; the teaching of the Upanishads, the system of the Vedanta, and Brahmanism are constantly regarded as synonymous terms. This assumption is exactly the contrary of the truth, as I hope to show; yet the error which led to it was a very natural one.

When the Western world first came into contact with the spiritual life of India, at the end of last century, the foreground of the Indian world was held by the Brahman caste; the sacred books were in the hands of the Brahmans; Sanskrit, the key to the sacred books, could only be learned from the Brahmans; and, finally, the Brahmans themselves confidently asserted that the wisdom of the sacred books was peculiarly their own, and without doubt were profoundly convinced of the truth of their assertion. It was very natural, therefore, that everything we received from the Brahmans, amongst other things, the Upanishads, should be regarded as having originated among the Brahmans; and it was not less natural that this opinion should continue to be held. It is true that, in the Upanishads themselves, there is a series of passages of quite unmistakable import, which point to quite another origin, to quite another relation between the real authors of the teaching of the Upanishads and the Brahman caste; yet these passages have been consistently overlooked, or rather their real bearing has not been grasped, for the very sufficient reason that an insight into this real bearing can only be reached along a line which students of Sanskrit were very unlikely to follow, and, as a matter of fact, failed to follow.

This line of study is the examination of the ethnical character of the Indian races to-day; and, more especially, the ethnical character of two races, the pure Brahmans and the pure Rajputs. This study has only been entered upon, in a strict and scientific way, quite recently, and to discuss it in any fulness would be out of place here; but its results, as far as they touch on the question of the origin of the Upanishads, can easily be summarised.

I think I may say that it is conclusively proved that there are at least four clearly distinguished races in India, whose character is primarily marked by difference of color. We are not particularly concerned with two of these races, the black race and the yellow race; but, as regards the others, it has been quite clearly shown that the pure nucleus of the Brahman caste is a white race, while the true Rajputs belong to a red race, quite distinct in every ethnical character from the race of the white Brahmans. It has never been doubted that the Brahmans of to-day, as far as their pure nucleus is concerned, are identical in race with the Brahmans of ancient India, who first consolidated into a hereditary caste at the close of the Vedic age. But it has only quite recently been shown that the Rajputs of to-day are identical in race, color, character, and even name, with the Rajaputras, Rajanyas, or Kshattriyas of Ancient India. We must therefore fix our regard on two races in Ancient India: the red Rajputs or Rajanyas, and the white Brahmans. What I hope to demonstrate, with regard to the Upanishads, is, that all that is most characteristic in their teaching, the heart and soul of Indian philosophy, originated with the red Rajputs; and that this teaching was adopted by the white Brahmans from the Rajputs, the record of this adoption being contained, quite clearly, in the Upanishads themselves. The ancient spiritual dignity of the Rajanyas, or Kshattriyas, has long been recognized by scholars. I need only mention what has been written on the subject by Goldstücker, Muir, Max Müller, and Cowell. It is universally recognised that many of the hymns of the Rig-Veda were composed by Rajanya seers, and the thrice-holy Gayatri, the most secred verse in all the Vedas, claims as its author Vishvamitra, prince of Kanouj, whom the Brahmanas speak of as a Rajaputra, that is, a Rajput.

And the peculiar relation of the Upanishads to the Rajanyas or Kshattriyas has also been recognized. Thus Cowell writes: "The great teachers of this higher knowledge are not Brahmans, but Kshattriyas, and Brahmans are continually represented as going to the great Kshattriya kings to become their pupils." And Deussen points out that the original possessors of the wisdom of the Upanishads "were not the priestly caste devoted to ceremonial but far rather the caste of the Kshattriyas: again and again we

find in the Upanishads the position that the Brahman begs the Kshattriya for teaching." All this becomes enormously important, when we know that we have to deal, not with a difference of caste or social status only, but with a difference of race.

But we may best illustrate the matter by translating certain passages in the Upanishads themselves. Perhaps the most remarkable is one in the sixth chapter of Brhad Aranyaka Upanishad. The actors in the drama are King Pravahana, who is expressly called a Rajanya or Rajput, and the two Brahmans Uddalaka and his son Shvetaketu. These two Brahmans are learned in the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, and the Sama-Veda, and fully initiated in the mysteries of the Brahmanical caste; yet they are compelled to confess their entire ignorance of the answers of five questions put to them by the Rajput king. It has hardly been sufficiently noted hitherto that these questions imply the whole doctrine of reincarnation or rebirth, and the continuity of moral energies, or "works": and the complementary doctrine of liberation from rebirth, and finally realised oneness with the eternal; two doctrines rightly held to be the head and heart of Indian wisdom. These two doctrines the Brahmans were entirely ignorant of, though learned in the three Vedas, and they are imparted to the Brahman Uddalaka by the Rajput king, with the following very remarkable words: "This wisdom never hitherto dwelt in any Brahman, yet I will declare it to thee." The Commentary of Shankaracharya explains the sentence thus: "This teaching asked for by thee, before being given to thee, never dwelt in any Brahman, and thou also knowest that this teaching was always handed down in succession among the Kshattriyas," that is, the Rajputs. The word used is one which specially refers to the transmission of an esoteric doctrine from teacher to pupil in an uninterrupted line, in the manner of an apostolic succession, and thus shows that Shankaracharya, the greatest of all the Brahmans, believed that the teaching of rebirth through conservation of moral energy, and the teaching of liberation, were hereditary with the Kshattriyas, and were imparted by them to the Brahmans on a definite historic occasion.

The parallel passage in the fifth chapter of the Chhandogya Upanishad puts the matter even more strongly: "Never before thee does this teaching go to the Brahmans, but among all peoples it

was the doctrine of the Kshattriya alone." Shankaracharya comments thus: "Before thee, this teaching went not to the Brahmans, nor were the Brahmans initiated in this wisdom; formerly among all peoples this was the teaching at the initiation of pupils of the Kshattriya race. For so long a time this teaching was handed down in succession among the Kshattriyas."

The word used again implies the analogue of apostolic succession. It is a remarkable confirmation of the truth of this narrative that the teaching of rebirth through conservation of moral energy, and the teaching of liberation are not, as a matter of fact, found anywhere in the hymns of the Rig-Veda, and it is well known that on the hymns of this Veda, the Yajur and the Sama-Veda are based; so that we can still verify the fact that Uddalaka, the Brahman, though learned in all the hymns, was yet ignorant of the teaching of rebirth and the teaching of liberation. We now know that this wisdom really belonged to another race, the race of the Red Rajputs, who imparted it to the White Brahmans, after the three Vedas were complete.

These passages are enough to prove that what is best in Indian wisdom does not belong to the Brahmans at all; but we may point to further passages in the Upanishads to show how widely they recognise his. Thus, in the fourth chapter of Kaushitaki Brahmana Upanishad, the Kshattriya or Rajput king Ajatashatru imparts divine knowledge to the Brahman Gargya, son of Balaka; the same story is found in the fourteenth chapter of the Shatapatha Brahmana, or the second chapter of Brhad Aranyaka Upanishad; and all versions of this narrative incidentally recognise the fame of another Rajanya, King Janaka, as a teacher of divine things. There are a number of shorter references to the same fact scattered through the Upanishads, but it would hardly be in place to collect and translate them all here; what we have given is more than enough to prove our position conclusively.

The spiritual ascendancy of the Rajanyas, Kshattriyas, or Rajputs does not end with the Upanishads. Rama, the Rajanya of the Solar line, is esteemed a divine incarnation; and it is noteworthy that Krishna, another divine incarnation, traces his teaching through the Rajanya or Rajput Sages, with special reference to the teaching of rebirth and liberation, as the fourth chapter of

the Bhagavad Gita shows. The earlier chapters of this summary of Krishna's teaching repeat and develop the best ideals of the Upanishads, and in recognising this, it is important to remember that Krishna himself and his disciple Arjuna are both Kshattriyas, and that Krishna lays special stress on the futility of the priestly system, that is, the peculiar teaching of the Brahmans.

Once more, long after Krishna's days,—if we are to accept the universal tradition of ancient India,—a great Rajanya or Rajput sage raised the standard of the same ideals, and preached the doctrine of life as a manifestation of moral energies, where well-being depends on the inward rightness of the will and heart, and not on the purchased favor of the gods. This teacher was Prince Siddhartha of Kapilavastu, most universally known as Gautama Buddha, "The Awakened," or Shakya Muni, "The Sage of the Shakyas." There has been endless dispute as to the real nature of the Buddha's doctrine; but this much, I think, is universally agreed upon: that the Buddha taught rebirth, or continuity of life, through the conservation of moral energies and liberation through renunciation of the selfish personality. I hope to have something to say, at a future date, as to the relation of this doctrine of the renunciation of personality to the docrine of the Self, in the Upanishads; but it is more in place here to point out that we find the Buddha in constant conflict with the peculiar ideals of the Brahmans, more especially their sacrificial system of bartering with the gods. This conflict with the Brahmans and their characteristic ideals comes out very clearly in the Tevijja Sutta, which is of high value as a historical landmark, showing, as it does, that in the Buddha's days, two thousand five hundred years ago, the Brahman caste had reached an advanced stage of exclusiveness and degeneration, very different from the time of the Upanishads, when the best Brahmans sat as humble pupils at the feet of the Rajput sages, and considerably more advanced than in the days of Krishna, the Kshattriya teacher, when, as many references in the Mahabharata show, the Brahman caste felt its position as yet insecure.

But the main fact we have to deal with, is this: three times in the history of ancient India, at three widely separated epochs, the latest of which was two thousand five hundred years ago, we find teachers of the Red Rajput race asserting the ideal of continuity

and rebirth through the conservation of moral energies, and the ideal of liberation through rightness of heart and will, as against the characteristic teaching of the White Brahmans, with their mercenary huckstering with the gods, for the good things of this life and paradise, and their ceremonial system with its exclusiveness, narrowness, and priestly privilege, and its sacrificial shedding of blood.

At the earliest of these three epochs, the Brahmans, conscious of their own ignorance and the futility of their system of selfish superstition, humbly and gladly accepted the truer spiritual ideals of the Rajputs, as the Upanishads show.

The second epoch shows us the Brahman caste again sunk in ceremonial and ritualism, while the teacher Krishna, though clearly pointing out the futility of the priestly system, yet counsels toleration and compromise.

In the third epoch, the Brahman caste had gone too far in crystallisation to be able to receive the healing teachings of the Buddha, and consequently we find him denounced by the Brahmans, because he "being a Kshattriya; had assumed the Brahman's privilege of teaching and receiving gifts;" and we find his followers ultimately driven from India by the consistent hostility of the Brahman priests. It is noteworthy that the chief missionaries of Buddhism to Tibet were Rajputs, men of the Buddha's own race, the race to whom we owe the wisdom of the Upanishads, as well as the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita, the race to whom the three historic divine incarnations in India belong, finally, the race from whom came even the holiest parts of the Rig-Veda hymns, the race of the Red Rajputs, the spiritual masters of India.

From all this we may draw two deductions: First, the propriety, even the necessity, of considering the highest outcome of the race-genius of the Rajputs—the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, and Buddhism—as a continuous whole; and secondly, the fact that, in describing any part of this continuous teaching as Brahmanism, we shall be losing sight of one of the most important truths in the spiritual history of India. Strictly speaking, we should mean by Brahmansim the system of priestcraft and ceremonial bartering with the gods,—"milking the gods," to use a chaste expression from the Vedic hymns,—which was denounced in the Upanishads, treated as

futile by Krishna, and finally rejected by Buddha, the system of priestcraft, with its promises of material success in this life, and sensual reward in heaven, which finally triumphed in the expulsion of Buddha's religion, and which is the very antithesis of the spiritual ideal of the Rajputs. Or we may mean by Brahmanism the system of compromise inaugurated in the Bhagavad Gita, accepted by the Brahma Sutras, and perfected by Shankaracharya, in which the true spiritual and esoteric doctrine comes from the Upanishads, that is, from the Rajputs, while the outer and lower teaching, the exoteric doctrine, is the undisputed property of the Brahman priests, the thrice-blest "eaters of the leavings of the sacrifice." But in no case can the name Brahmanism be fitly given to the Upanishads, in which all that is most characteristic of the Brahmans is unsparingly denounced.

THE LAW OF LIFE.

From the beginning the common mind of man has confused the Law.

He will not perceive that diversity is the fulfillment of unity: that all diversity, proceeding from One, must of necessity partake of the full character of the *One* from which the *All* proceeds.

As man rises he finds more and more of the Unity—the uniting of things—until he reaches the Perfect Unity. Yet living as he does among the fulfilments of Unity, that is the diversity, he has confused the All, and, instead of tracing himself inwards and upwards, as it were, to his source, to his Unity, growing larger and diviner as he ascends, he sees no further than his outward and visible self.

We have eyes, but our vision is dim. We can see, but see not. We might see the whole, the Unity, but see naught but ourselves.

Christ came, and through him and from him streamed the light of the knowledge of All Things. A purest ray serene, from the One to the All. But man's vision was dim: having eyes, he saw not, having ears, he heard not. He could not perceive the light. And so, falling down, he worshipped the image, and not the light of the knowledge of all Things.

O man! O diversity! Know thy oneness, thy Unity. Putting off the mask of thy visibility, flee to within the circle, finding there thy true lover, Thyself.

Christ came, and through him and from him streamed the light of the knowledge of all Things, and the light of the Fatherhood of God. But to those, who have penetrated inwards and upwards to the beyond, there is no Fatherhood of God.

A candle burned in the darkness, and those, on whom the light fell, saw and were glad. But one, on whom the light fell, seeing that it was good, desired yet more. And becoming restless with a great longing, he sought.

Suddenly a glorious light, a most Great Sun, arose above the horizon of his longing, and those, on whom the light fell, were transformed.

And the light of the Sun fell on the light of the candle, and the light of the candle grew dim. And the light of the candle was no longer light, for there fell a shadow behind.

O man! O great diversity! Know thy oneness, thy Perfect Unity. Putting off the mask of thy visibility, flee to within the great circle, finding there thy true lover, Thyself.

BALZAC'S LITERARY STATURE, II.

But it is, of course, when we come to the types belonging to France itself, that Balzac's work looms largest. He is so distinctly above that frightful provinciality of so many modern French writers, that makes them blind to everything except Paris—which they exalt into a kind of anthropomorphic deity, and apostrophise, as though it was to all intents synonymous with the universe. Balzac draws many of his best types—morally as well as artistically best—from the provinces, and, most of all from his own ancestral Touraine, and the valley of the Loire. The noteworthy thing about his French characters is, that they have so wide a range, and are drawn from so many different levels of social life. In "The Lily of the Valley" there is a very convincing portrait of Louis XVIII, and peers of France, generals and ministers of state complete the hierarchy. His great ecclesiastical personages are no less satisfying, as in Albert Savarus, which carries us to the ancient and honorable city of Besançon, within sight of the Jura mountains. Like the Austrian Salzburg, once the capital of an almost independent state, Besançon has, again like Salzburg, a very distinctive ecclesiastical atmosphere, which takes us straight back to the palmy days of the medieval Church. Its prelates are commanding and conspicuous figures, true princes of the Church, courtiers as well as theologians. Every detail of this worldly-holy atmosphere is reflected in the sensitive mirror of Balzac's mind, and then transfered, with marvelous accuracy, to the pages of his story.

So it is with every stratum of society. When we are reading a story like Pierrette, we are inclined to say: here is a man who paints the meanness and sordid humors of the *bourgeois* world so excellently that he must be one of them, soaked in their spirit, oozing out the genius of their life from his finger-tips. Every figure is so clearly drawn, so vigorously and vividly conceived, that we seem to be reading the lives, nay more, the confessions and intimate thoughts, of actual people; and this perfect completeness of conception goes so far with Balzac, and is so much a part of his nature, that he feels himself under a certain compulsion to give us the whole past history of each of his personages, and does give it with a richness and sincerity of invention that is quite marvelous. And it

must not for a moment be supposed that Balzac gives us mere abstractions; dissertations on provincial manners; on the contrary, the essence of his genius is, that it is purely creative; that he really conceives, and makes us see and feel, a whole world of genuinely organic types, instinct with the breath of life. Of Balzac it may be truly said, as of Shakespeare, that we feel the creative power of the Genius of humanity working through him; that he is driven by necessity to form figure after figure, to make them live and move.

Reading books like "Pierrette" and "Eugénie Grandet" alone, we would be certain to think of Balzac as distinctively the poet of the provincial trader and retired shopkeeper. Yet no writer is more thoroughly and unconsciously an aristocrat and a courtier. His well-bred people are genuinely well-bred—a thing that can be said of wonderfully few writers among those who adorn their pages with Dukes and Duchesses. Types like Félix Vandeness could simply not be improved on, whether for richness of inner life, or perfection of outer manners. And so it is with the Balzac's grand-monde. They are genuine. They are the true forefathers of the not less genuinely aristocratic personages in the Dialogues of "Gyp," another writer whose well-bred people ring true. It is a study of wonderful interest to watch the passage from Balzac's aristocrats of the Restoration to "Gyp's" aristocrats of the Third Republic, out of a job, so to say, yet still preserving something of the old nobility, the grand manner, the *noblesse--oblige* of former days. It speaks highly for the psychological truth of both writers, that the sequence of their pictures is a genuine page in the history of social evolution.

Another feather in Balzac's cap, and one very justly to be vaunted, is the fact that he was the very first writer to seize on the great commercial and financial types which are steadily ousting the old landed aristocracy from the pre-eminent place. Compère Grandet is the earliest, and in some ways the strongest and best of these; he is really the hero of the story in which his pathetic and ineffectual daughter plays the title-role. We can clearly realise the steps by which the former cooper gradually climbed the hill of fortune; his financial operations are soundly conceived and intelligently rendered. Following this course, a man would inevitably get rich, adding hundred to hundred, thousand to thousand, million to mil-

lion. But far more than the outer truth of the story is the inner truth of character behind it. We realise the large meanness of the old cooper; we feel once more the truth of Bacon's words—drawn from the experience of his own life—that "the ways to enrich are many; most of them foul." Dr. Nucingen is another very admirable type, the grandfather of "Gyp's" baron de Sinai; and, like him, a portrait true to life. Yet none of Balzac's innumerable men and women are mere copies; mere reporter's work, like a good many pictures in some of our recent stories. There is something genuinely creative in all of them. In their nostrils is the breath of life. They were not made; they grew, by an inner inherent necessity, and not by the intention of the novelist. He depicted them because he had to. His friends have borne unconscious testimony to this, in recording that Balzac used to talk of his heroes and heroines as though they were people of his acqaintance, familiarly known, and constantly encountered. And the very phrase: "heroes and heroines" recalls another merit of Balzac's; he was, it is said, the very first writer to admit a hero who cleans his old gloves. We can see the force of this, if we think of the epidemic of heroes we have recently suffered from, who toss purses of gold about, and spit three pirates on their rapiers. In other words, Balzac has a very sound, and not less rare, sense of life as it actually is; he never approaches the absurdities of the modern "historical" novel, with its essential unreality.

Once more, Balzac has known how to infuse into his religious characters, his rural priests and retiring Abbés, a spirit of genuine piety, which elicits our unconscious respect, quite independently of our agreement with their dogmatic position. Both sides of the ecclesiastical world he does equal justice to: the worldly-holy and the genuinely spiritual; in both, as before, giving us, not essays and abstractions and generalities, but living and concrete types.

Finally the artistic life of Paris, with its figures like Raoul Nathan and Florine, is not neglected. Nathan is almost a prophecy of a very distinguished Parisian writer, in whom were blended, as in Nathan, the artistic sensibility of the Jew, his essential materialism, and his genius for affairs.

But this is becoming a mere catalogue of excellences, where all

types are excellent, and where all are represented. It is time to reverse the medal; to say something of Balzac's great weakness in the region of form. He is met everywhere by the same difficulty that overtook him, when writing the history of the awakened genius, Louis Lambert. Having formed his types, or rather, having allowed the Genius of Humanity to form them through him, he is quite at a loss; he does not know what to do with them. His plots are invariably good up to a certain point, and then they as invariably go to pieces.

If we look back for a moment to his mystical novels, we may find the reason for this. Balzac has a genuine sense of the hidden divinity and mystery of life. He feels the abysses opening all round him. Otherwise he would never have even attempted works like the two we have spoken of. But, feeling the mystery, he did not go on courageously to solve it for himself, he did not try to sound the abysses, but accepted the soundings of others. He failed in spiritual self-reliance. The readings he gives us of life's riddles are Saint-Martin's and Swedenborg's, not Balzac's; he speaks of visions and illuminations, but he failed to see for himself, to seek the light for himself. Therefore he lacks original intuition and insight into the divine and daemonic forces which are behind this life of ours, using it to immortal ends; and, as a consequence, he has no true sense of the goal of life, and the ways in which the thousand circumstances of our mortality make towards that goal. He has a fine sense of character—a sense indeed, amounting to divination. But he has failed to seize on the occult relation between character and event; he does not see how our lives flow forth from our wills. He has no intuition of the constructive forces behind our many-colored histories. Therefore his plots go nowhere. They fall into absurdity after absurdity.

We can get an outward index of this in the halting way his stories are put together; the poor constructive power he everywhere shows in his own work. There is not the slightest sense of economy of force, or of the proper use of material. We have already spoken of the glaring instances in which his characters speak thirty or forty pages of correctly punctuated prose, full of accurate quotations. Now, with all deference to a hero of Molière's, no one ever speaks good prose in common life; and even in set speeches, the notes of

reporters would show how defective in fact are many efforts which have a surface appearance of correctness.

This is only one among many glaring faults of construction, in the mere outward sense. His novels are full of interminable epistles, or, like "The Lily of the Valley," they are all epistle—one portentous letter, that the post would have refused to carry, on account of its excess weight. Or there are letters within letters, as in the same story, or stories within stories, as avowedly in Albert Savarus, and tacitly in so many others, where the episodes are really separate narratives.

The lack of constructive power runs down into the sentences. Balzac's prose can never compare with that of some of the later masters, like Loti or Bourget or, most of all, that unhappy genius, Guy de Maupassant. One of the marvels of modern literature is the superlative excellence of style of so many of these French novelists—so that in virtue of this one quality, we are inclined to rank them as almost equal in value to the work of the great Russians, in spite of the glaring defects of humanity, in so many of the French masterpieces. But this beauty of form is a sealed book to Balzac. As prose, his prose is invariably uninteresting and commonplace; his ear is defective; his periods are dull.

Thus the weakness of constructive power comes out in more easily enumerable defects; but this is only the outward and visible sign of the much greater defect we have spoken of: the inherent inability to discern the relation between character and event; the failure to see how the Great Law works in the affairs of men.

Yet, when all is said, Balzac's qualities far outweight his shortcomings. What he too consciously attempts, he fails in; but the unconscious part of his work remains very great. Through him, a whole epoch of a great nation has faithfully portrayed itself; hundreds of admirably conceived characters, wholly true to life, and of every level of society, have made permanent for us the wonderfully varied, picturesque and remarkable period from the Restoration to the middle of the century. Every type is true, and there is something of the lavishness of the Creative Power in their abundant variety.

WINGED WORDS.

Nothing would seem easier, at first sight, than to define a language or a word. It is probable that if a dozen people were asked whether they had a clear idea in their minds of what they meant by a language, and, still more, what they meant by a word, they would answer without the smallest hesitation that they had a perfectly clear idea in both cases, especially in the latter; and that no sensible person could have any doubts about the subject at all. But if you pressed these too confident definers, it is probable that they would be driven to give an example instead of a definition, and say, English is a language; French is a language; Latin is a language; everybody knows what a language is. If one is malicious enough to accept this as satisfactory, one may dissemble a little, and ask, Yes; English is a language, of course; but is there such a thing as good English and bad English? Of course there is, the rash catechumen is certain to reply, and for the moment he has no doubt at all in his mind that he knows perfectly what good English is. Follow up your advantage, and ask him whether the "Northern Farmer, Old Style," and the "Northern Farmer, New Style," are good English or not; whether sentences like this:—

"An' 'eerd 'um a bummin,' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock ower my 'eäd—

or like this:

"Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to stick—"

are good English, and he will unquestionably answer, Certainly not! And yet your victim will hardly say they are bad English, either. He will probably take refuge in a subterfuge, by saying that they are a dialect of English. Take an example from another Northern dialect; a verse like this:—

> "The deil he could na scaith thee
> Or aught that wad belang thee
> He'd look into thy bonnie face
> And say 'I canna wrang thee.'"

And if he knew that it came from Burns, he would probably say that this was also not bad English, but a dialect, perhaps not an

English dialect at all, but a Scotch dialect. Point out that this implies that Scotch is an independent language, like German or Danish, and he will probably say that Scotch is not a language, because the upper classes in Scotland talk English. Then insist that the speech of the "upper classes" in Scotland is at once recognisable as different from the speech of the same classes in England, and ask with insistence whether each are equally "good English." The answer will probably depend on your victim's birthplace. If North of the Tweed, you will have driven him to admit that the true and genuine English is spoken not in England at all, but in Scotland. If South of the same boundary river, you can show fine shades of distinction between the "educated" dialects of England, North, South, East, and West; and your too willing definer will probably be driven into saying that the true English is the English of Mayfair, of a certain limited radius round Hyde Park Corner.

This is the moment to insist on the language of cooks, cabmen, and street Arabs within the sacred radius; and your victim will be driven in despair to exclaim:—"Good English is what I talk, and what everyone talks who agrees with me." Then one may ask whether this standard of correct speech knows all the words in the language; and, if not, whether words which he may not know are necessarily bad English; say, scientific or artistic technicalities, when used by people as irreproachable as the members of the Royal Society and the Royal Academy. At this point it will be seen that the definition "Good English is what I speak" has fallen through, and unless the victim is ready with another definition—which is not likely—the Socratic method will have triumphed; and its triumph will be followed by the admission that to define a language in general, or any one language in particular, is not as easy as it looked. To tell the truth, a rigid definition of a language is not only difficult, it is impossible. In the short space of a century, a language may go through enormous changes, and the most rigid definition at the beginning of the century would no longer fit the language at the end. Take the most evident instance. This century has practically seen the birth and development of all the industries connected with electricity, magnetism, and steam; to meet this development, we have had to form hundreds, probably thous-

ands, of new words which are practically good English now, but at which Addison or Goldsmith would stand aghast. In pronunciation, the same thing as in vocabulary. To take two instances only. Byron said "clargy" instead of "clergy," and "balcony" instead of "balcony," in spite of coming within the Mayfair limit. One may make the thing more striking by noting how many hundreds of words used by Shakespeare, and doubtless understood by the theatre-goers of his day, are hopelessly unintelligible to the uninitiated, and require to be explained in dictionaries as much as if they were Chocktaw or Chinese. To take only a few words, under a single letter. Who, without having studied Elizabethan literature, will venture to fit the meanings to words like these:—"aby, acknown, acture, affy, agazed, aglet, aguise, ames-ace, amort, antick, a-row?" One might multiply instances by hundreds. Indeed, Trench has gone to the trouble of classifying hundreds of the words of "English Past" which have been lost and utterly forgotten by "English Present." This makes it pretty plain that the boundaries of a language in time—the words it contains—are perpetually shifting and impossible to define. And it should be equally evident, from what has been already written of the Mayfair limit, and the Northern Farmer, that the boundaries of a language in space,—the local area it covers,—are not to be demarcated at all. In other words, it is impossible to mark the confines of a language, impossible to define it.

Perhaps the chief fact in languages which we should have to take note of, were we trying, not to define, but to describe, what a language is, would be the difference between spoken language and written language. It will be admitted at once that the latter is more or less artificial. It has its origin, probably, in the attempt to give permanent record to verses already known by heart. So at least it was in India; so it was in Greece. In some countries, as for instance in Tibet, written language hardly goes further than thus recording the sentences of the past. This in itself is enough to make written language lag behind speech, and to make it, to that extent, archaic, an artificial survival. A good instance is the archaic language of Bible Translations, which tends to find its way back into speech. If written langugae begins with the recording of old tra-

ditions, and is so far an artificial survival, it does not escape artificiality in numerous other ways. Set forms, selected words, turns of phrase, which would not be possible in speech, gradually find their way into the written languages, and the divergence between the two may go to almost any limits, till we find cases like mediæval Europe speaking a score of tongues while writing Latin only, or mediæval India speaking a score of languages, while writing only Sanskrit.

Putting aside for the moment the question of literary or written languages, let us look at the conditions of spoken language. or speech. Here at once a great fact, which is veiled by the graphic uniformity of written language, stands out clearly before us. This great fact is that the variations of speech are practically unlimited; that every province, every district, every village almost, has something singular and peculiar to itself; and looking a little closer, we shall see that in the speech of each individual, in tone, accent, timbre, variety of vocabulary, and even idiom, there is something peculiar to him, and not shared with anyone else. Even in the same individual, the range of variation is practically unlimited; his vocabulary varies at different periods of his life, expanding with full manhood, and contracting again, as old age brings failing memory. And there are still greater variations in tone and timbre, following the physiological changes of the throat, from the "big, manly voice" to the "childish treble" that pipes and whistles in his sound. There are other variations, due to change of health, season, climate, so that, in the same individual, language may almost be said to vary from day to day, as it unquestionably varies from year to year. And it may be asserted with absolute confidence, that in no case is the language of two individuals quite identical, but manifests new variations in vocabulary, idiom, timbre, tone, with every advance in our methods of analysis. If then the language of one individual be not in any strict sense constant; if, moreover, the language of two individuals is never at any time identical, it will become clear at once that it is impossible to define a language strictly; and also why this is so. It will become clear that language, like every other phenomenon we know of, is subject to incessant, unlimited variation; that here, as elsewhere, no rigid lines can possibly be drawn. It may probably be taken as perfectly certain that no advance in the study of language, no sound basis of philological theory, can pos-

sibly be reached, unless and until this fact of the practically limitless variation of language, in both time and space, is thoroughly recognised. That it has not been sufficiently recognised hitherto, is due to the fact that philology has in the past been almost entirely occupied with written language as opposed to speech; in other words, with a necessarily artificial product, and not with the living, natural language at all. But quite recently this too exclusive occupation with the mummies of past speech has begun to give place to a larger recognition of the transcendent importance of speech, of the word spoken and heard; and a new philological method, with wonderfully interesting results, is gradually growing up from this recognition.

TO ALL OUR CONTRIBUTORS

IN THE SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL SENSE

Greeting!

"THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM" recently published a Notice, addressed to the authors of many unwritten articles, among its readers, praying them to get the said articles written down and sent to us. This request brought such good results, in the form of certain excellent contributions by quite new writers, that we are impelled to repeat our invitation. Good friends, no longer hide your talents in the napkin of the unmanifested, but precipitate them on paper, and give them to waiting humanity, through our pages. Be encouraged to tread in the path of the Sages who have gone before you! Let your inward revelations take body in the written word! Modesty is a beautiful virtue; so also is courage. Show that you are wise, by letting this word suffice.

Now to address our contributors in the material sense: "THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM" with every year grows firmer on its foundation, more able to stand alone. Its independent life grows and developes. A new milestone in its journey is passed, with this number. From henceforth, all subscriptions and donations are to be sent *to the Editor direct,* and no longer to four or five different addresses, in different cities. We hope soon to bring all subscriptions up to date, and, where subscribers have sent their contributions in the middle of a volume, we hope to send them notices asking for a supplementary subscription to carry their subscription forward to the beginning of a new volume. There are a good many among our readers whose subscriptions, like the articles alluded to above, still dwell in the unmanifested; these we shall ask to precipitate, to materialise. To all and sundry, we make the request that contributions, subscriptions, communications and sendings of whatever nature may in future be addressed to us direct; money being remitted by postal orders, payable to

The Editor,

THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM,

Flushing, N. Y.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

Founded by H. P. BLAVATSKY at New York in 1875.

The Society does not pretend to be able to establish at once a universal brotherhood among men, but only strives to create the nucleus of such a body. Many of its members believe that an acquaintance with the world's religions and philosophies will reveal, as the common and fundamental principle underlying these, that "spiritual identity of all Souls with the Oversoul" which is the basis of true brotherhood; and many of them also believe that an appreciation of the finer forces of nature and man will still further emphasize the same idea.

The organization is wholly unsectarian, with no creed, dogma, nor personal authority to enforce or impose; neither is it to be held responsible for the opinions of its members, who are expected to accord to the beliefs of others that tolerance which they desire for their own.

The following proclamation was adopted at the Convention of the Society held at Boston, April, 1895:

"The Theosophical Society in America by its delegates and members in Convention assembled, does hereby proclaim fraternal good will and kindly feeling toward all students of Theosophy and members of Theosophical Societies wherever and however situated. It further proclaims and avers its hearty sympathy and association with such persons and organizations in all theosophical matters except those of government and administration, and invites their correspondence and co-operation.

"To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race, or religious belief, who aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness, and unselfish regard one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely proffers its services.

"It joins hands with all religions and religious bodies whose efforts are directed to the purification of men's thoughts and the bettering of their ways, and it avows its harmony therewith. To all scientific societies and individual searchers after wisdom upon whatever plane and by whatever righteous means pursued, it is and will be grateful for such discovery and unfoldment of Truth as shall serve to announce and confirm a *scientific basis for ethics.*

"And lastly, it invites to its membership those who, seeking a higher life hereafter, would learn to know the *Path* to tread in this."

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